

**AMENDMENT TO THE SPECIFICATION**

Please **REPLACE** the paragraph immediately following the heading “Cross-Reference to Related Application” with the following **REPLACEMENT PARAGRAPH**:

The present application is a continuation-in-part patent application of commonly-owned and co-pending U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/337,906 entitled “PURCHASING SYSTEMS AND METHODS WHEREIN A CUSTOMER TAKES POSSESSION AT A RETAILER OF A PRODUCT PURCHASED USING A COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK”, filed on June 22, 1999, which issued on June 22, 2004 as U.S. Patent No. 6,754,636, and which is itself a continuation-in-part of:

(i) U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/190,744 entitled “METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR A CRYPTOGRAPHICALLY ASSISTED COMMERCIAL NETWORK SYSTEM DESIGNED TO FACILITATE BUYER-DRIVEN CONDITIONAL PURCHASE OFFERS”, filed on November 28, 1998, now abandoned;

(ii) U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/083,345 entitled “METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR MANAGING REMOTE VENDING MACHINE TRANSACTIONS”, filed on May 22, 1998, now abandoned;

(iii) U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 08/889,503 entitled “SYSTEMS AND METHODS WHEREIN A BUYER PURCHASES A PRODUCT AT A FIRST PRICE AND ACQUIRES THE PRODUCT FROM A MERCHANT THAT OFFERS THE PRODUCT FOR SALE AT A SECOND PRICE”, filed on July 8, 1997, which issued on June 19, 2001 as U.S. Patent No. 6,249,772, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 08/707,660 entitled “METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR A CRYPTOGRAPHICALLY ASSISTED COMMERCIAL NETWORK SYSTEM DESIGNED TO FACILITATE BUYER-DRIVEN CONDITIONAL PURCHASE OFFERS”, filed on September 4, 1996, which issued on August 11, 1998 as U.S. Patent No. 5,794,207; and

(iv) U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 08/889,319 entitled “CONDITIONAL PURCHASE OFFER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM”, filed on July 8, 1997, which issued on July 4, 2000 as U.S. Patent No. 6,085,169.

Each of the above-referenced applications is incorporated by reference herein in its entirety.